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Potato Stocks

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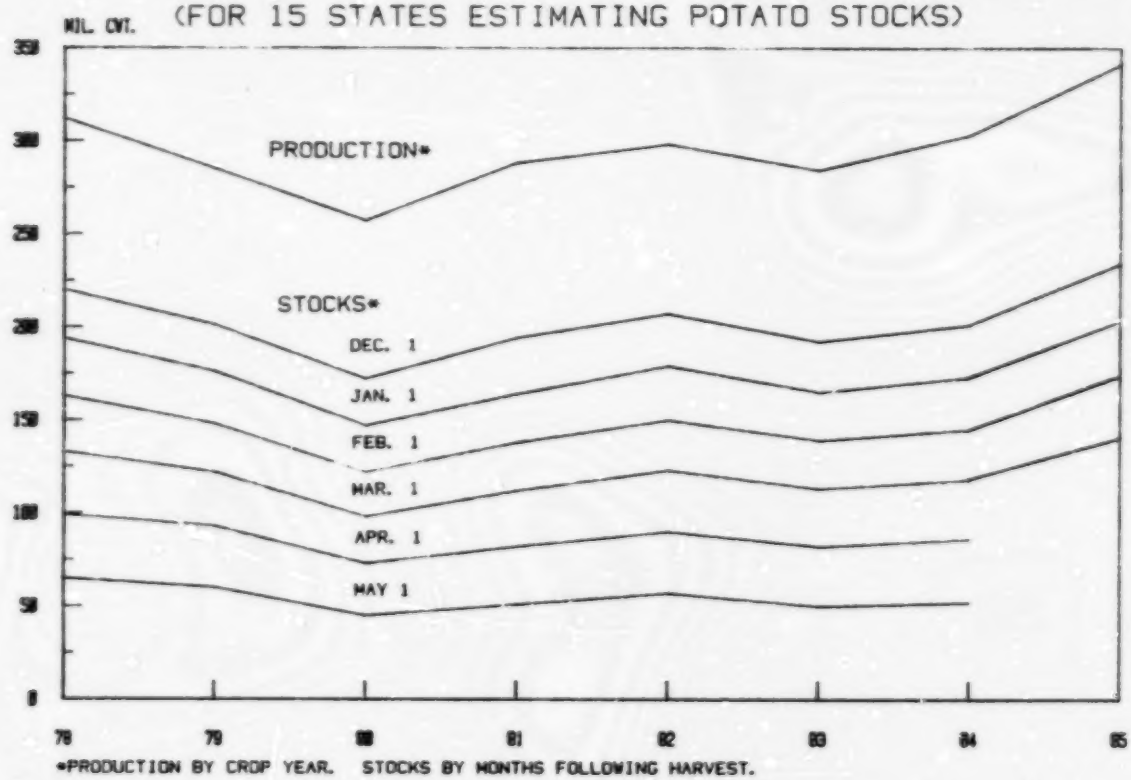
POTATO STOCKS UP 16 PERCENT

March 1, 1986 potato stocks totaled an estimated 137 million cwt, up 16 percent from last year and 22 percent above two years ago. Heavy cullage continues in Western States where shrinkage and sorting losses are more than double last season. Stocks on-hand now account for 40 percent of fall production in the 15 storage States compared with 39 percent last March 1.

(continued on page 4)

FALL POTATOES: PRODUCTION AND STOCKS

(FOR 15 STATES ESTIMATING POTATO STOCKS)



*PRODUCTION BY CROP YEAR. STOCKS BY MONTHS FOLLOWING HARVEST.

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* NOTE: Stocks are defined as the quantity remaining in storage for all purposes and uses, including shrinkage and waste and other losses that occur after the date of each report. Sales of fall potatoes for all purposes generally account for about 90 percent of the total fall production. Shrinkage, loss and home use account for the remaining 10 percent. However, this year losses are running much higher than normal.

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TABLE 1. FALL POTATOES: PRODUCTION AND STOCKS, 15 MAJOR STATES

CROP YEAR	PRODUCTION	DEC 1	JAN 1	FEB 1	MAR 1	APR 1	MAY 1
				1,000 CWT			
1975	266,422	181,720	156,220	129,710	102,850	70,970	
1976	294,978	198,630	172,230	142,030	112,830	81,130	
1977	295,421	202,550	175,300	147,930	119,850	88,680	
1978	311,981	219,950	193,520	162,980	132,570	99,250	64,830
1979	284,940	200,820	176,020	147,910	121,720	92,550	59,535
1980	256,518	172,030	147,010	122,065	97,680	72,660	44,546
1981	287,710	193,610	164,380	137,820	111,780	82,270	50,760
1982	298,031	206,525	178,980	150,200	122,500	90,105	57,305
1983	284,344	192,150	165,330	138,900	112,730	81,740	50,365
1984	303,384	201,410	173,380	144,760	118,400	86,440	52,465
1985	340,792	233,775	201,300	169,810	137,420		

TABLE 2. POTATOES PROCESSED 1/, EIGHT STATES, 1984 AND 1985 CROPS

STATE	STORAGE SEASON	TO DEC 1	TO JAN 1	TO FEB 1	TO MAR 1	TO APR 1	TO MAY 1	ENTIRE SEASON
					1,000 CWT			
IDAHO AND MALHEUR CO., OREG	1984-85	19,000	24,310	29,200	34,010	39,510	44,650	57,410
	1985-86	17,830	22,980	26,660	32,170			
MAINE 2/	1984-85	1,820	2,410	3,015	3,520	4,330	5,185	6,550
	1985-86	2,215	2,920	3,805	4,545			
WASH AND OTHER AREAS, OREG	1984-85	20,745	24,690	29,345	33,560	38,815	43,380	51,670
	1985-86	21,590	25,665	29,450	34,450			
OTHER STATES 3/	1984-85	5,695	7,510	9,210	10,930	12,745	14,715	21,005
	1985-86	6,470	7,990	9,900	12,020			
TOTAL	1984-85	47,260	58,920	70,770	82,020	95,400	107,930	136,635
	1985-86	48,105	59,555	69,815	83,185			

1/ TOTAL QUANTITY RECEIVED AND USED FOR PROCESSING REGARDLESS OF THE STATE IN WHICH THE POTATOES WERE PRODUCED. DOES NOT INCLUDE QUANTITIES USED FOR POTATO CHIPS IN MAINE, MICH, MINN, N DAK, OR WIS. 2/ INCLUDES MAINE GROWN POTATOES ONLY. 3/ MICH, MINN, N DAK, AND WIS.

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TABLE 3. FALL POTATOES: PRODUCTION AND STOCKS ON MARCH 1, 1985 AND MARCH 1, 1986

STATE	CROP OF 1984			CROP OF 1985		
	PRODUCTION	TOTAL STOCKS MAR 1, 1985	MAR 1 STOCKS AS % OF PRODUCTION	PRODUCTION	TOTAL STOCKS MAR 1, 1986	MAR 1 STOCKS AS % OF PRODUCTION
	1,000 CWT		PERCENT	1,000 CWT		PERCENT
CALIF	7,280	2,700	37	7,878	2,300	29
COLO	17,225	7,150	42	17,920	9,350	52
IDAHO	86,600	41,500	48	102,515	46,000	45
MAINE	21,360	10,200	48	27,160	14,000	52
MICH	12,540	4,100	33	12,100	4,100	34
MINN	13,775	7,000	51	14,145	7,000	49
MONT	1,924	1,740	90	1,890	1,300	69
NEBR	2,480	1,000	40	2,173	1,000	46
N Y - L I	3,577	400	11	3,870	600	16
- UPSTATE	6,630	1,400	21	6,125	1,100	18
N DAK	20,615	8,400	41	23,630	10,700	45
OHIO	2,418	250	10	2,465	130	5
OREG	23,525	8,700	37	26,701	10,500	39
PA	5,160	1,560	30	5,720	1,840	32
WASH	56,925	16,600	29	62,370	21,000	34
WIS	21,350	5,700	27	24,130	6,500	27
15 STATE TOTAL	303,384	118,400	39	340,792	137,420	40

RELIABILITY OF MARCH 1 STOCKS ESTIMATES

The "Root Mean Square Error" for the March 1 stocks estimate is 3.8 percent. This means that the chances are 2 out of 3 that the current estimate of 137 million cwt will not be above or below the final estimate by more than 3.8 percent or approximately 5.2 million cwt. Chances are 9 out of 10 (90 percent confidence level) that the difference will not exceed 6.6 percent or approximately 9.1 million cwt.

The 10-year (1976-85) record of the differences between the March 1 stocks estimate and the final estimates averaged 3.88 million cwt, ranging from .30 million cwt to 6.00 million cwt. During this 10-year period, the March 1 estimate has been below the final estimate 8 out of 10 years.

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Stocks in the 3 EASTERN STATES totaled 17.5 million cwt on March 1, 29 percent above a year earlier and 24 percent above two years ago. Maine growers stored 14.0 million cwt up 37 percent. Pennsylvania stocks of 1.84 million cwt were 18 percent above last year. New York's areas combined for 1.70 million cwt, a decrease of 6 percent.

The 6 CENTRAL STATES contained 29.4 million cwt this March, up 11 percent from last year and one-third above two years ago. North Dakota potatoes totaling 10.7 million cwt were up 27 percent from last year. Wisconsin at 6.50 million cwt was up 14 percent. Minnesota, Michigan, and Nebraska stocks remained about equal to last year. Ohio has fewer potatoes on-hand than a year ago.

The 6 WESTERN STATES stored a total of 90.5 million cwt on March 1, 1986. This is 15 percent above last year and 18 percent above two years ago. Idaho stocks at 46.0 million cwt are 11 percent above last year. Very heavy sorting is being done on potatoes still showing frost damage from last October. In addition, reports indicate that 11 percent of potatoes still in storage are frost damaged. Washington storages contained 21.0 million cwt of potatoes on March 1, 27 percent above last year. Oregon stocks, at 10.5 million cwt, were up 21 percent, and in Colorado, stocks of 9.35 million cwt were up 31 percent. California and Montana show 15 and 25 percent fewer potatoes on-hand, respectively, than a year ago.

DISAPPEARANCE from harvest through February totaled 203 million cwt, 10 percent above the pace of last season. This movement includes 34.6 million cwt lost from sorting, shrinkage, feeding and dumping, up 47 percent from the 23.5 million lost last year to date.

PROCESSING totaled 83.2 million cwt this year, up 1 percent from the 82.0 million cwt processed last year at this time. Processing during February totaled 13.4 million cwt, up 19 percent from last year's 11.3 million cwt.

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